



DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23221

Telephone: (804) 367-2323 Fax: (804) 367-2391

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

The following constitutes an application for preliminary consideration of eligibility for the nomination potential of a site to the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. This does **not** mean that a property is being nominated to the registers at this time. Rather, it is being evaluated by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) staff and the State Review Board to determine if the property qualifies for such listings. Applicants will be notified of the staff's and the State Review Board's recommendations.

Contact the appropriate DHR Regional Archaeologist to determine if previous survey material for this site is on file, and if the site has been previously evaluated by DHR. Help identifying the correct regional office is available [here](#). Obtaining previously recorded information could save a significant amount of time in preparing this Preliminary Information Form (PIF). The site must be recorded with DHR, if it has not been previously entered into the DHR inventory. The archaeological inventory manager can assist with the recordation of the site, and will also provide you with the address of the regional office to which you should send your completed PIF materials.

PIF Materials: The printed version of this form should be submitted on 8½" X 11" paper, along with the electronic version, preferably in Word format. The form may be typed or hand-written, if an electronic format is not available. The electronic version of this PIF should be submitted on a disc, or it may be attached to an email to the archivist. In addition, a printout of the site form from the DHR database should be submitted with the PIF. A copy of the site database printout may be obtained from the archaeological inventory manager.

Note: All submitted materials become the property of the Department of Historic Resources and will not be returned. In addition, the materials will be posted on the DHR public website for a period of time during the evaluation process. Please address questions regarding the PIF application to the archivist or regional office staff.

Maps: Please include two (2) maps showing the location of the property:

- A copy of a section of a USGS topographical Quad map with the date, the name of the county/city and the quad printed on the map, and with the name of the site with its state site number and its location on the map labeled with a pencil (USGS Quadrangle maps can be printed free of charge using the Map Locator at the USGS store: <http://store.usgs.gov>).
- A sketch site plan showing the site boundaries in relationship to other features that are important in conveying the location of the site. Please include the name of the site, the state site number, a "North" arrow, date, and "Not to Scale" (if appropriate).

Note: Maps may also be generated free-of-charge using DHR's [public V-CRIS MapViewer tool](#).

Before submitting this form, please make sure that you have included the following:

- Section of labeled USGS Quadrangle map showing the location and boundaries of your property
- Sketch site plan map of the site
- Disc with digital files (Word document, TIFs, JPEGs)
- Completed Resource Information Sheet, including
 - Owner's signature – **this is required. The PIF will not be evaluated without owner(s) signature.**
 - Applicant contact information
 - City or county official's contact information

Thank you for taking the time to submit this Preliminary Information Form. Your interest in Virginia's historic resources is helping to provide better stewardship of our cultural past.

Virginia Department of Historic Resources PIF Resource Information Sheet

This information sheet is designed to provide the Virginia Department of Historic Resources with the necessary data to be able to evaluate the significance of the property for possible listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. This is not a formal nomination, but a necessary step in determining whether or not the property could be considered eligible for listing. Please take the time to fill in as many fields as possible. A greater number of completed fields will result in a more timely and accurate assessment. Staff assistance is available to answer any questions you have in regards to this form.

General Site Information		For Staff Use Only	
		DHR Site #:	
Site Name(s):	Fort Farr (44FX0185)		
Site Date(s):	1861	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Circa <input type="checkbox"/> Pre <input type="checkbox"/> Post	Open to Public? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Limited <input type="checkbox"/> No
Site Address:	Intersection of Braddock Road (VA Rt 620) and Ox Road (VA Rt 123) City: Fairfax Zip: 22030		
County or Ind. City:	Fairfax County	USGS Quad(s):	Fairfax Quadrangle Virginia

Physical Character of General Surroundings

Acreage: 0.25 Approximate Dimensions: 80' x 80' x 2.5'

Site Description Notes/Notable Landscape Features:

Site 44FX0185 is a Civil War fortification located on top of a rise at the southern end of a narrow ridgeline that trends in a north direction paralleling Ox Road (Enclosure 1). The site is located 150 ft. northeast of the intersection of Braddock and Ox roads and 400 ft. west of Parking Lot K. The site area is approximately 0.5 acre in size. The ridge top on which the site is located is at approximately 470 ft. above mean sea level. The earthwork displays a circular plan with a diameter of approximately 80 ft. (Enclosure 2). The interior of the fortification is approximately 80 ft. in diameter. The site is in excellent condition. The fortification is covered in dense brush and surrounded by large poplar and cherry trees. The ground cover at the site is primarily greenbrier that covers the ground in great profusion. The brush and leaf cover on the fortification's parapets have effectively limited erosion to the site. The nearly impenetrable thicket of greenbrier also has served to protect the site from illegal relic hunting. There are no signs of recent relic hunter activity at the site.

The parapets of the fortification vary in height. On the western side of the fortification, the parapet is 2.5 ft. high. On the east side the parapet is 2 ft. high. The interior depth of the fortification is 3 ft. below the top of the parapet and 1 ft. lower than the surrounding ground surface on the exterior. The interior of the fortification is flat. No signs of cannon platforms or embrasures for cannon are present. On the west side of the parapet, a slight cut on the interior was recorded. The cut may represent the eroded remains of a firing banquette - a narrow shelf excavated on the interior of the parapet that would allow a soldier to stand and fire over the parapet.

As a result of the pedestrian survey, an historic road trace modified into a trench line was located. This feature is recorded as Site 44FX0137. The approximately 10 ft.-wide road trace was located approximately 50 ft. east of Site 44FX0185 and runs northward along the eastern edge of the ridge top for approximately 1200 ft. (Enclosure 2). Based on its proximity to Site 44FX0185, the trench line of Site 44FX0137 was used to guard the advance to Site 44FX0185 and to protect Site 44FX0185 along its right flank.

The remnant of a building site is located approximately 75 ft. southeast of Site 44FX0185. The site remnants consist of a scattering of brick and rough-cut stone covering a 50-by-50 ft. area. The building was likely one of the residences of the African American community that populated the Farr's Cross Roads area after the Civil War.

The terrain surrounding the site was agricultural during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. Soldiers' diaries indicate that there were additional trenches in the area surrounding Site 44FX0185. In order to facilitate plowing, local farmers may have filled in some of the trenches in the area near Site 44FX0185. It is likely the existing earthwork at the site was too large to grade so it was simply left intact. The fortified road trace, Site 44FX0137, was likely retained and used by the post-war residents for transportation and access to the agricultural fields.

Current Use of Site: Not currently used – forested area/hill

Any Known Threats to the Site: Development, erosion, neglect, vandalism

Ownership Category:	<input type="checkbox"/> Private	<input type="checkbox"/> Public-Local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> Public-Federal
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Archaeological Description: Discuss (a) archaeological deposits present at the site and their level of integrity, and (b) prior investigations at the site as well as prior historical documentation for the site, citing all available references. For sites being evaluated for the Threatened Sites Fund, also discuss types of threats facing the resource, the severity of such threats, and if threats are immediate or long-term in nature.

The site is a 0.25-acre Civil War circular fortification located on George Mason University (GMU) property north and east of the intersection of Braddock (VA 620) and Ox (VA 123) Roads (Enclosure 1). The fortification was constructed prior to the First Battle of Manassas (July 1861) to defend the important crossroads known historically as Farr's Cross Roads. The site was identified during an archaeological survey conducted on GMU property in 1979. Since that time, little research has been conducted on the site. The duration and intensity of occupation and use by Confederate and Union soldiers during the Civil War validate the strategic importance of the site as high ground overlooking the intersection of two historic roads, Braddock Road and the Road to the First Court House (today's Ox Road), and the surrounding countryside.

Previous archaeological investigations at Site 44FX0185 consisted of a pedestrian reconnaissance survey, mapping, photography, and background research. No subsurface testing was conducted. Background research indicates that members of the Fifth Alabama Infantry Regiment constructed the fortification and associated earthworks in late June and early July 1861. Research also shows that the site held strategic importance throughout the war due to its strategic location overlooking the significant Farr's Cross Roads. The site vicinity likely contains the archaeological remains of multiple troop campsites. Field investigations resulted in the determination that the site retained surface integrity. Intact features at the site include the remains of the parapet and the interior ground surface of the fortification.

The site retains integrity of location, which is an essential aspect of the resource. Likewise, it retains integrity of design. Although the setting in this vicinity has been greatly altered, the current intersection of Braddock and Ox Roads remains visible, which reflects the strategic purpose for the placement of the fortification and associated earthworks, and contributes to integrity of association in spite of the modern development encroachment.

Both Brian Corle in his *Archaeological Assessment of Site 44FX185 (DHR File Number: 2008-1541)*, and Christopher Sterllng, in his *Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Archaeological Site Record (DHR ID: 44FX0185)* consider Site 44FX0185 eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places under categories A and C.

Two other archaeological sites (44FX0137 and 44FX2765) are located adjacent to the site. Site 44FX0137 is a fortified road trace that extended north from the fortification and paralleled Ox Road for approximately 1200 feet. Site 44FX2765 is a Civil War camp abutting the northeast corner of the fortification. No significant investigation has been conducted to determine the condition of sites 44FX0137 or 44 FX2765.

References:

Balicki, Joseph, Kerri Culhane, Walton H. Owen II, and Donna J. Seifert
2002; Fairfax County Civil War Sites Inventory, Report to Fairfax County Park Authority Resource Management Division, Fairfax, Virginia. Prepared by John Milner Associates, Alexandria, Virginia

Corle, Bryan
2008; Archaeological Assessment of Site 44FX185, The Earthwork at Farr's Cross Roads, Fairfax County, Virginia; DHR File Number; 2008-1541

Sperling, Christopher
2018; Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Archaeological Site Record; DHR ID: 44FX0185

Archaeological Significance Statement: Discuss historical and archaeological reasons that the site is likely to be significant. Briefly note any significant events, personages, and / or families associated with the site. Detail what research issues could be effectively addressed with the archaeological remains preserved at this site.

The fortification and associated earthworks were constructed and initially occupied by Colonel Robert Rodes' 5th Alabama Infantry Regiment in June and July 1861 as part of the Confederate early-warning line established between Falls Church and Fairfax Station to detect Federal army movement westward from Washington, D.C. into Northern Virginia. Assigned to Brigadier General Richard Ewell's Brigade, and having been assigned the responsibility of guarding this key intersection, Colonel Rodes' 5th Alabama Infantry occupied the area surrounding the intersection of Braddock and Ox Roads, known at the time as "Farr's Cross Roads", on June 22 and 23, 1861. The regiment constructed fortifications in and around Farr's Cross Roads and remained in this position until July 17. On that day, after a skirmish with advancing Federal forces, the 5th Alabama retreated as part of the Confederate withdrawal to the main Confederate defensive line along the Bull Run. The Battle of First Manassas (Bull Run) occurred four days later on July 21. After the battle and the ensuing Federal retreat, Confederate forces reoccupied the fortifications at Farr's Cross Roads as part of a defensive line from Lewinsville to Wolf Run Shoals, before withdrawing in October 1861 to Centreville and establishing winter camps and extensive fortifications on the Centreville plateau.

The location and use of Fort Farr by both Federal and Confederate forces throughout the war is indicative of the strategic importance of the site. The Road to the First Courthouse (today's Ox Road) aligned north/south connecting Fairfax Courthouse and Vienna to the north with Fairfax Station on the Orange & Alexandria Railroad (O&A RR) and Wolf Run Shoals on the Occoquan River (the defacto Mason Dixon Line early in the war) to the south. Braddock Road was a well-traveled road connecting the port of Alexandria to Centerville in western Fairfax County and to points further west in Loudoun County and into the Shenandoah Valley. During the Confederate occupation of Fairfax County the heavily fortified Centreville plateau served to protect and secure the vital Manassas Junction. It was here that the Manassas Gap Railroad, originating at Mount Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley (the bread basket of the Confederacy and a vital source of food for the Confederate army), connected to the Orange and Alexandria Railroad. Accordingly, during the early stages of the Civil War, Fort Farr was a key forward outpost of the Confederate defenses.

The Federal army relied on the O&A RR and the federal supply depot established at Fairfax Station to provide munitions, food, forage and supplies to federal forces stationed in the area of Fairfax Courthouse and at points farther south toward Warrenton and Culpeper. Federal forces occupied the area in and around Fairfax Courthouse from November 1862 to May 1863, and used the fortifications left by the Confederates, reorienting them for their own purposes. From 1863 to 1865, the fortifications were used as part of the early warning line established by Federal forces in Eastern Virginia (Enclosure 4). During both of these periods control of the local roads and security of the O&A RR and the depot at Fairfax Station were paramount as Confederate cavalry and partisans, including Mosby's Rangers, were a constant threat.

During the course of the war, various Confederate and Federal units occupied Fort Farr.

- 5th Alabama (Rodes' Regiment), Ewell's Brigade, June-July 1861
- 16th New York Infantry (Davies' Regiment), Miles' Brigade, 5th Division on its way to Centreville and the Battle of First Manassas, July 18-19, 1861
- 27th Virginia Infantry, Jackson's brigade, 18 September 1861
- 1st New Jersey Infantry, March 9, 1862 (following the Confederate Army withdrawal from Northern Virginia in March 1862)
- Various Union cavalry units, Nov 1862 – May 1863
- Cavalry units of various cavalry brigades assigned to the 22nd Corps, Defenses of Washington (part of Federal early warning line in Eastern Fairfax County), 1863 – 1865

This site was part of 283 acres of land owned by local resident and farmer, Samuel Ratcliffe Farr. Upon his death in 1819, Samuel's land holdings were sub-divided into several parcels and distributed among his heirs. One of his three sons, Richard Ratcliffe Farr, received roughly 183 acres that stretched from what is now University Road to the southern boundary of University Mall and east toward the center of the GMU campus. Richard later married Margaret Willcoxon, whose family home Blenheim is now Historic Blenheim and Civil War Interpretive Center in the City of Fairfax, and they had two sons, Rezin Samuel Farr and Richard Ratcliffe Farr, Jr. When Richard died in 1843, Margaret inherited the Farr home and property. Because the Farr family lived in this area for such a long period of time, the intersection came to be known as Farr's Cross Roads. 1861 Civil War maps include a notation for the home of 'Widow Farr' near the Cross Roads (Enclosure 3), and the name Farr's Cross Roads appears on early (1879) Fairfax County maps.

The Farr home burned to the ground during the Civil War. Later, Richard Ratcliffe Farr, Jr. built a new home and included an attached cottage for his widowed mother. This cottage, locally known as Grandma's Cottage, was moved several times to accommodate local development projects and is now located on the grounds of Historic Blenheim and Civil War Interpretive Center at 3610 Old Lee Highway in the City of Fairfax.

References:

Balicki, Joseph, Kerri Culhane, Walton H. Owen II, and Donna J. Seifert
2002; Fairfax County Civil War Sites Inventory, Report to Fairfax County Park Authority Resource Management Division, Fairfax, Virginia. Prepared by John Milner Associates, Alexandria, Virginia

Corle, Bryan

2008; Archaeological Assessment of Site 44FX185, The Earthwork at Farr's Cross Roads, Fairfax County, Virginia; DHR File Number; 2008-1541

Hawks, Steven

5th Alabama Infantry Regiment. The Civil War in the East.

<http://civilwarintheeast.com/confederate-regiments/alabama/5th-alabama-infantry/>

The Official Record of the War of the Rebellion

OR 2: 443, SO 100, Maj Gen Beauregard, July 8, 1861

OR 2: 433, Report of LtCol March, 16th New York Infantry, July 16-17, 1861

OR 2: 456, Report of Col Rodes, 5th Alabama Infantry, July 16-17, 1861

Enclosures:

1 – Detail of Fairfax, Virginia, 7.5-minute Series Quadrangle, Indicating the Location of Site 44FX0185 (USGS 1990, photorevised 1994)

2 – Map indicating location of Site 44FX0185, adjacent archaeological sites and modern features

3 – Detail of U.S. Topographical Engineer Map Indicating Site 44FX0185 Location (USBTE 1861)

4 – Map indicating the location of the Federal cavalry screen in Eastern Fairfax County, 1863-1865

5 – Fort Farr photograph, facing east; 2017

6 – Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Archaeological Site Record; 2018; DHR ID: 44FX0185

Legal Owner(s) of the Property (For more than one owner, please use a separate sheet.)

Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Dr. ☐

Miss ☐ Ms. ☐ Hon. ☐

George Mason University

(Name)

4400 University Drive

Fairfax

VA

22030

(Address)

(City)

(State)

(Zip Code)

703-993-8750

(Email Address)

(Daytime telephone including area code)

Owner's Signature:



Date:

1/14/2019

•• Signature required for processing all applications. ••

In the event of corporate ownership you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: Tom Calhoun, Senior Vice President

Daytime Telephone: (703) 993-8750

Applicant Information (Individual completing form if other than legal owner of property)

Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Dr. ☒

Miss ☐ Ms. ☐ Hon. ☐

Brian Platt

George Mason University

(Name)

Fairfax

VA

22030

Department of History and Art History

MSN 3G1

George Mason University

(Address) bplatt1@gmu.edu	(City)	(State) 703-993-1253	(Zip Code)
(Email Address)	(Daytime telephone including area code)		
Applicant's Signature: <i>Brian Platt</i>		Date: <i>1/17/19</i>	

Notification			
In some circumstances, it may be necessary for the department to confer with or notify local officials of proposed listings of properties within their jurisdiction. In the following space, please provide the contact information for the local County Administrator or City Manager.			
Mr. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mrs. <input type="checkbox"/>	Dr. <input type="checkbox"/>	
Miss <input type="checkbox"/>	Ms. <input type="checkbox"/>	Hon. <input type="checkbox"/>	
Fairfax County		Bryan Hill	County Executive
(Locality)	(State)	(Zip Code)	(Daytime telephone including area code)
Fairfax	VA	22035	703-324-2531
(City)	(State)	(Zip Code)	(Daytime telephone including area code)

Please use the following space to explain why you are seeking an evaluation of this site.

George Mason University desires to validate the historical significance of this site, as part of an initiative to preserve and interpret the site for use and appreciation by GMU students and faculty as well as the general public.

Would you be interested in the easement program? Yes ☐ No ☒